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HUMAN RELIGION

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PREFACE

THIS book is a plea for the enhancement of the value of human life and a treatise on religion, briefly explaining some of the failures of Christianity to meet the requirements of advancing civilization.

It suggests a religious evolution, as essential to the correction of existing irreligious and inhuman conditions believed to have been produced mainly by the fallacies of our prevailing religious teachings.

It contains no quotations from the great philosophers who have theorized upon the possibility of Biblical inspiration and has no complex arguments to cause ambiguity.

It is intended to be within the grasp of the average reader and is offered to the public for the purpose of eliciting comment

PREFACE

upon the same subject from other writers—in fact, it is the desire of the writer to inaugurate a literary crusade having for its object the ultimate suppression of waste and destruction of the world's greatest asset—human life—and the restoration of permanent peace to the world.

C. M. J.

HUMAN RELIGION

PART FIRST

THERE is no language known to mankind capable of conveying to the human mind knowledge of the vastness of the universe. The human mind is not so constructed that it could grasp such knowledge even if there was a language available for its description. The limitations of human intelligence renders it impossible for us to embrace and understand a concise description of limitless space containing a never-ending extension of solar systems such as the one of which the earth forms a part.

We cannot comprehend or define the infinite when applied to that limitless scheme of organized matter comprising the uni-

verse which, so far as we know, has no beginning or end and which continues its perfected mechanical operation in all directions—solar system after solar system and beyond to other solar systems, on and on through space without end.

It is not possible for scientific research ever to attain a stage of perfection that will enable us to enumerate within one millionth part of one per cent the globes which constitute the working parts of that grand mechanical scheme, or to understand the force which holds them in action.

The earth is about twenty-five thousand miles in circumference and is surrounded by an atmosphere fifty miles deep. The smallest gnat, or even a microbe imperceptible to the naked eye, flying in our atmosphere, would occupy relatively a greater portion of that space than this world occupies in the incalculable space through which it moves, and in size compares with some of the other

planets as that microbe compares in size with an albatross.

The diminutive part performed by the world in the grand celestial mechanism formed by the orbs of the universe, must be admitted. It is, therefore, contrary to the promptings of human intelligence not to assume that the aggregated life on this small planet is an infinitesimal part of the gigantic accumulation of life which must exist in some form on the myriads of planets performing similar functions in the same general organization; in fact, it is claimed by astronomers that unmistakable evidence of life has already been observed on our nearest neighboring planet, thirty million miles away, which we have named Mars.

In the light of these conclusions, based on knowledge common to the human race, how wanting in perception and how egotistical it seems for mankind to base its whole scheme of civilization on the superstition

that human life which comes into being on this small planet is so favored over the life which exists on other planets; that it is eventually transferred into space and made immortal, although every atom of the body which produced the life remains on earth.

After the human body has worn out and ceases to perform the functions of life, it becomes waste material to decay and disappear into other forms of earthly substance: yet it is believed that the power produced by the body when in working order,—the action resulting from the pulsations of the heart and nerves, of thought, of feeling, of sight and of motion,—does continue to live after the human machine, as a unit, has ceased to exist and it is upon this superstitious belief that mankind has advanced the education of the human race since the beginning of human thought.

This unnatural future existence, according to the teachings of modern religion, is

peculiar to and given as a special privilege to human beings on this pin-point dot in the universe with no thought as to the destiny of life on all the other worlds and suns which we know exist and on the thousands of which we have no knowledge.

In analyzing this last statement it must be remembered that the God of Christianity is made to sacrifice His only beloved Son for the salvation of the souls of the inhabitants of this little world, with no reference as to how this sacrifice is to save the souls of the living on all the other inhabited planets over whom He is supposed, as the creator of the universe, to preside with equal justice.

The insignificance of life on this planet, when considered as a part of the immense volume of life which is believed to exist on other planets of the universe, does not, however, deprive it of its importance to the individuals of the human race or to the race as a whole. It is the only life that is known

to us; we know of no other life. None of the thousand million people, more or less, now living or the thousands of billions who have lived and died, ever witnessed a real manifestation from those who previously had passed away. Never has there existed the slightest evidence that would stand the test of a crucial examination to prove that the life of man does not cease absolutely and completely, both materially and spiritually and in every other way, when the heart ceases to beat; yet to a superstitious faith in a future, unnatural, immortal life we subordinate the real existence which nature has given us.

The Christian religion uses the life we actually live on this earth as a preparatory existence for the spiritual life into which we are supposed to go when the real life ends, and in that real life we are required to deprive ourselves of many pleasures which might be enjoyed without injury to our-

selves or others, with a hope of reward in a spiritual life to come.

Such a religion cheapens real human life by making it a means of acquiring a supposed spiritual life that is believed to exist only through faith in its teachings, the fallacies of which are plain and which have been explained by some of the wisest philosophers and ablest writers the world has ever produced.

After nearly two thousand years of teaching in accordance with the gospel of Christianity, we find the world steeped in crime more ghastly than any horrors depicted by fiction. We find the human intellect more strenuously applied to the discovery of further means to destroy human life than to preserve it, although, within one year, five million men have been destroyed with the means already at hand.

We are, to-day, witnessing the premeditated massacre of an innocent, harmless peo-

ple by a nation that is the pampered ally of two highly christianized nations, either of whom could have saved the lives of a million human beings through diplomatic negotiations with their murderous ally. We find a great majority of the christianized inhabitation of the earth grappled in a conflict which has already resulted in the destruction of prosperous nations and the commission of crimes more cruel, and consequences more disastrous and heartrending, than anything ever conceived. And each involved nation is invoking the aid of God and claiming to be engaged in a holy war, with the instigator of this most sanguinary and desperate struggle proclaiming Divine authority as the right through which he rules.

A devout believer in the Christian religion contemplating the horrors of the European War was heard to ask: "Where is God? How can He permit such things?"

“Nero fiddled while Rome burned.” America is dancing while Europe bleeds and pours into her lap gold for the purchase of means for the killing of more men.

There is no way of estimating the suffering and misery experienced by the human race, to-day, nor could there be anything more apparent than the absolute disregard for the value of human life, after nearly two thousand years of guidance under the gospel of Christianity which teaches us to make life on earth subordinant to the supposed spiritual life to come.

There is something wrong in the fundamental principles upon which our civilization is progressing and the glaring defect is unquestionably a disposition to regard human life as of little or no consequence.

As the dog with a chunk of meat crossing a stream dropped the meat to grab at the enlarged watery reflection, lost the substance in pursuit of the shadow, so are we

taught by religion to suppress our real lives to the promise of an unproven spiritual life to come.

The average adult is susceptible to the attractions of the unreal just as a child is susceptible to the wonders of a fairy tale. The boy who in his imagination climbs the bean stalk and steals the magic harp from the giant, although he knows the story is a fairy tale, experiences a pleasurable thrill akin to the almost universal wish of the human race to believe in a promise of immortal existence after this life ends.

It is upon this credulity of mankind that religion has played through the centuries of its existence, until blind faith has so imprinted itself on the human mind that undeniable truth and reason are almost helpless to correct the injury wrought by some of its teachings; but the Church must bear its share of responsibility for the present wick-

edness of mankind, for it emphasizes the claim that the advance of civilization is mainly due to the spreading of its gospel.

There must come a time when the human race will awaken to a realization of the value of human life and to the importance of looking upon it as paramount to the unsecured promise of a spiritual life.

Nearly all great statesmen are cowards when faced with a religious discussion; in fact, the consequences of divergence from the established religious creeds is so disastrous to the ambitions of those who have the temerity to voice their beliefs that few are willing to make the sacrifice. So the Church has gone on without organized opposition throughout all the centuries since the dawn of the Christian era, gaining power as an organization, but, in the face of advancing scientific education, losing convinc-

ing persuasive force to convert intelligent educated non-believers to its faith. Its influence, however, is a menace to the free advocacy of any movement which does not conform to its teachings; but nothing can obscure the fact that unbridled wickedness is more dominant in the world to-day than ever before. In fact, there is a slowly growing belief that the religion taught by our existing Christian churches has proven to be a failure and that something better must be found to guide the human race into its full natural inheritance of peace and happiness.

No religion burdened with the necessity of meeting the advance of science and discovery which are exposing its fallacies, with a plea for blind faith in its teachings, can accomplish for the human race the result for which the Christian religion is striving. A religion dependent upon superstitious faith and not susceptible of proof must, in

time, find its limitations and lose its usefulness.

We can no longer believe that the Biblical miracles were supernaturally wrought, for the genius of man has produced results far more wonderful. We can live beneath the surface of the water, fly through the air, speak across the ocean, perpetuate the human voice, and we have perfected scores of other accomplishments which surpass the magical performances recorded in the Bible which the Church has depended on for proof of its infallibility.

The credulity of man insofar as the belief that this life should be subordinated to a supernatural existence after death, must succumb to the necessity of improving this, the real life, by teaching a gospel founded on facts which are susceptible of proof; on unclouded reason; on simple and easily understood laws which will guide us to real happiness and away from sorrow, misery,

and pain—a gospel that teaches us how to reap a reward while on earth for good living and noble deeds and to a correct appreciation of the value of human life; in other words, a human religion.

Intellect is the result of the operation of the various functions of the live body and becomes a means of control over the senses of man, of sight, of hearing, of smell, of taste and of feeling. It is through the exercise of these senses that we feel emotions, and while nature called into being the operation of our senses it leaves to the intellect the control of them in producing emotions which are for either good or evil.

Nature provided these senses so that we might produce for ourselves all of the enjoyable emotions, the gratification of which the world affords. It did not construct us to feel a craving for that which produces a sensation of joy and pleasure simply to impose punishment in denial of its gratifica-

tion, nor did it intend that we should live our lives in gloom. It serves no good purpose either to ourselves or to others to forego the pleasures of this life when by their enjoyment no injury is done; but, to the contrary, it is intended that our desires should be gratified, and the human race is just that much better off if they are. But we must be taught by a human religion that no act in the pursuit of or in the enjoyment of pleasure shall endanger the life or health or do injury either to ourselves or others. Religion should teach us how to embrace the possibilities of life under conditions which are well within the laws of health and which are conducive to the happiness of others as well as ourselves.

Down the line of life from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood and from manhood to the end, there are possibilities of enjoyment and success which are not and cannot be fully acquired until the human

mind is directed by a different creed from that which we now pretend to follow.

Good health, freedom, gratified ambition, friendship, love between the sexes, companionship, the execution of justice, the distribution of charity, peace, comfort and luxury are all compensations which may be attained in this life as rewards for virtuous living, while disease, failure, slavery, misery, despair and premature death are almost sure to result from wickedness. Therefore, the reward for being good and the punishment for being bad are existent on this earth, yet we are taught to ignore this fact or, rather, to subordinate it to an anticipated reward or punishment which is supposed to be an imaginary life.

We must be taught through the ages to come, that the taking of human life is cowardice and its preservation is bravery. This life can be made so desirable through the result of proper teaching that the full ap-

preciation of it will cause universal desire to prevent its premature destruction either through violence or reckless use of vitality in the gratification of our desires. Such a result can be accomplished only through an organization that would be able to withstand the savage resistance awaiting it from existing religious organizations and be powerful enough to spread a gospel entirely human in its teachings: a gospel combining all the good that is human in the gospels of existing religions, with a doctrine devoid of superstitious gloom and founded upon principles of high morality, directing the way to comfort, luxury and happiness without creating a feeling that we are sinning while enjoying success.

The impulsive desire of man, resulting from centuries of education, makes it imperative that his religion should possess a quality which invites worship; and the existence of the universe permits us rationally to

give thanks to that power or force, or whatever continuing energy causes its perpetual life, for the life which it gave to us.

We know that the universe does exist, and we know that the earth does not diminish because earthly matter is indestructible and gravity retains every atom of matter belonging to it; we know, also, that it does not increase in bulk, for there is no matter in space subject to its attraction to cause its increase. It is a rational conclusion, therefore, that the other orbs of the universe are controlled by the same natural laws and remain, as the earth remains, unaltered so far as bulk is concerned.

We think and speak of the universe as having been created, yet we know that nothing can be created without the material or substance of which it is composed. Therefore, there could have been no creation; or if created from material which did exist, then we come to the creation of the material

—a problem which presents the same anomaly. So without doing violence to the natural laws which have been proved by scientific research, we must conclude that the existence of the universe has endured, retrospectively, throughout unending time—in fact, that it never was created but has always existed.

At any rate we arrive at a point in the creation problem where human intelligence fails: but we do know that the universe is real, and no superstition is required to believe in its existence. In fact, it is an obvious truth and presents a result so sublime in its grandeur that we can safely satisfy our desire for worship by appropriating the laws which govern that grand perpetual life as our guiding God and worship them as the God of nature and controller of that which we know to be of value—our human lives.

Let us sue such a God, not as a God of vengeance to visit upon the children the sins

of the fathers, or as one who—being all powerful and knowing all things in the past and future—puts sinners on earth that they may be damned to everlasting punishment in a future life, or who allows the escape of punishment for sins committed simply by repentance: but let us look to that God as a God of law and justice who through the laws of nature constitutes that real power which keeps us a part of the universe and so constructed our bodies that we can enjoy all the manifold blessings and escape, so far as may be, the pain and sorrows of this life by proper use of our intelligence.

Let us not claim that in addition to the giving of human life our God has written for us, by supernaturally inspiring certain mortals, a set of ambiguous rules to govern our course of life—rules which are open to many constructions and impossible of universal understanding: but let us use the intellect which life gives us to promulgate a

simple gospel founded upon these natural laws, adapted to the present condition of the human mind, so that it may be used in educating the inhabitants of the world to live their natural lives to the best advantage and to maintain permanent peace among nations.

Permanent peace will never be maintained so long as the valuation of human life remains at the low standard in which it is now held; nor can the value of human life be enhanced by any known means other than through the teachings of a human religion founded upon natural laws. Religion has caused its depreciation; religion must restore its value.

A religion to do this cannot be written by one man, for it must teach us how to meet all the exigencies of life. A successful movement in this direction must emanate from an organization having power to command the best literary and philosophical talent the world affords. If some of the

peace-loving philanthropists who are seeking a way to advance the cause of permanent peace could but realize the good effect which would be produced to the cause by a rearrangement of our religious text upon sane and believable conceptions, it would seem reasonable to assume that the future could possess an organization financially strong enough to cope with the fanaticism of our existing religions.

When we consider the immense accumulation of wealth which is at the disposal of the many so-called orthodox churches now extant, it seems obvious that very slow progress could be made by an opposing cause without the formation of an organization having financial backing of some of the great money kings of the world. It is not suggested that money, or the earning of money, be made an object in the establishment of a human religion; but it is essential, in the incipency of such a cause, to have the

means with which to organize a force equal to the resistance with which its very existence will be met.

It is not within the intellectual power, nor is it the intention of the writer to promulgate a new religious doctrine: what is written here is humbly submitted to the public because of a firm conviction that by bringing the teachings of religion from the supernatural to the natural a great betterment in the condition of the human race will be caused, and that the world is not so good under its present instruction that it cannot be improved.

All that can be done by this or any other writer is to make suggestions with the hope that they may reach and influence some philanthropist who has the means and the disposition to inaugurate a movement having for its object the crystalization of that vast mental opposition to the supernatural quality of our existing religious creeds,

which secretly exists, into an open, active opposition that would unquestionably result in untold benefit to the future of mankind.

Let us imagine the effect on the human race if, two thousand years ago, our religion had been founded upon commands somewhat on the lines of the following suggestions:

1st. Thou shalt not take or endanger thy life either by violence or in the excessive use of thy vitality, except in an effort to preserve the lives of others who through accident have become endangered; for he who preserves his own life, or the lives of others, is brave and should be honored by all men.

2nd. Thou shalt not take the life, or endanger the life of another, for he who takes human life is a coward and will be scorned by all good men.

3rd. Thou shalt learn the art of life. How to preserve thy body. How to live up to the laws of health. How to enhance the

joy of living without injury to thyself or others and to obey and aid in the enforcement of the laws of the land in which thou livest.

4th. Thou shalt teach thy children all that thou knowest which will enure to their health and happiness. How to suppress angry passions. How to cultivate and maintain good dispositions. How to derive pleasure from serving others as well as thyself.

5th. Thou shalt render aid to those in distress whenever it is within thy power and extend thy sympathy to those in sorrow, and by cheerfulness endeavor to bring them back to the enjoyment of life's duties and pleasures.

6th. Thou shalt, by honest dealing with thy fellow men and by the production of something of value, endeavor to acquire an ample fortune that thou mayest provide for thyself and thine all the comforts and luxu-

ries that the world affords, to the end that thy life and the lives of those dependent upon thee may be happy and free from want.

7th. Thou shalt avoid excess in the gratification of thy desires, remembering that the excessive use of many of the blessings of this life deprives thee of the power to enjoy, leads to ill health and often to crime.

8th. Thou shalt so conduct thy daily habits that thy life shall endure through the time which nature intended, to the end that the world may be benefited by the knowledge thou shouldst gain as time progresses and by thy good example.

9th. Thou shalt not take that which does not rightfully belong to thee, or lie, or deceive others for any purpose whatsoever.

10th. Thou shalt do unto others as thou wouldst they should do unto thee.

Crude and incomplete as these suggested commands seem, they are at least human

and possessed of fundamental principles upon which the human mind could be trained to regard life as the most valuable asset bestowed by nature upon this world, and to cause the placing of its value by mankind above that of money or other property. Christianity has produced the opposite result.

Personal ambition, greed, and avarice control the world to-day, and human life is freely subordinated to them. Had the people of this world undergone training during nearly two thousand years by religion founded upon the above suggested commands, properly constructed and enlarged, it is inconceivable that the ruler of a peaceable domestic people could have led them into a world conflict which foreshadowed the destruction of millions of human lives, simply to gratify his personal ambition to make the greatest empire in history.

It would be inconceivable also under such

teachings that the nations of the world should consider it necessary to maintain immense standing armies and navies or to go to war as a means of settling their differences.

It is not desired nor intended to unjustly criticise or hurt the sensibilities of those who are members of church organizations, and it is freely admitted that a large proportion thereof are entirely sincere in their beliefs; but no writer can avoid bringing down upon himself the intolerance and condemnation which opposition to their superstitious faith engenders, no matter how well-founded and truthful that opposition may be. It is essential, however, to look existing conditions well in the face, regardless of consequences, if the cause advocated is to be advanced.

The actual church organizations are not doing the real charitable work of the world to-day, nor have they ever accomplished in material charity the good to the human race

performed by scores of public and private organizations not directly a part of any sectarian branch of the Christian religion. The immense revenues of the churches are expended mainly in the maintenance of church buildings (many of which are palatial in their appointments), and to the payment of comfortable salaries and to support the army of preachers, priests, and dignitaries necessitated by a desire to maintain the strongest concrete organization possible. Comparatively but little of these revenues are devoted to the needs of the distressed population to be found in every community. The church buildings are used as places of meeting to hear discourses by the best orators obtainable and to enjoy beautiful sacred music. Church service is made as attractive as possible, and while a congregation includes many who are devout believers in the faith, the meetings are more or less social functions where the members congregate to

display their most attractive costumes and enjoy communication with their friends and neighbors; the great desideratum being, however, according to the devout and credulous members, the salvation of the souls of those who attend these meetings and the condemnation of those who do not. Thus hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually by the church, which, if applied to real charitable work, would render untold comfort and happiness to thousands of beings possessing actual and valuable lives.

The carrying into effect of enunciations proclaimed from church pulpits would mean the condemnation of at least two thirds of the inhabitants of the earth to punishment in a life to come for being unable to subscribe to such beliefs, regardless of what their lives might otherwise be.

The Christian religion is founded upon *ex parte* evidence which, according to the laws of man, is ruled out in the trial of criminal

or civil cases in our courts of justice. Nature has given us analytical brains with which to discriminate between that which is and that which is not convincing, yet we are condemned as sinners because of an inability to accept their faith blindly and against the conclusions to which our intelligence forces us. If these teachings, which fortunately have now become primitive, were actually realized, how absolutely repulsive to human conception of justice they would be; and how unjust the church makes its all-powerful God who is represented as controlling the universe and incidentally His word, the Bible, directing the course of human life on this small planet.

We must judge the work of the church by the results accomplished and concede to it the benefit that has resulted from its effort, which is limited mainly to the artificial consolation that hope gives to those in affliction; a consolation that need not be de-

stroyed by any proposed human religion, for there is nothing suggested nor would its creed contain anything to render the soul accredited by the Christian religion to the human body less exalted or less worthy of the supposed spiritual life to come after death: but we must remember that neither the thousands of sermons preached weekly nor the millions of prayers, nor the love, nor the fear of its complex God has proven effectual in preventing the conditions of wickedness and crime which pales into insignificance the sins of the ancients now bearing down the human race to despair and sorrow.

When we analyze even thus briefly the Christian religion and expose its weakness, it does not seem hazardous to change our religion to conform to the known laws of nature.

The approach of the end of man's life is accompanied by suffering which is often prolonged and agonizing both to the sufferer

and those who are dearest to him; but to those who remain there is always that consoling thought that the dear departed is at rest, and there is nothing revolting in the thought that our loved ones are peacefully sleeping with no painful awakening to come.

Had the human race been directed by the prevailing religion through centuries past, that nature gave us this life to use for good, for peace and for happiness, without reference to a future existence, the mental contentment of mankind would be on a higher plane than it is to-day; and if the thought and energy which is now applied to the contemplation of and the effort to gain a future unnatural existence was devoted to the solving of the problem of this, our real life, we would be much further advanced towards civilization than we are.

Let us imagine that by some mental evolution the rich and powerful church organizations now existing could be devoted to the

inauguration of a human religion such as has been indicated herein; that the aggregated force of its army of dignitaries through some unforeseen influence should experience a change of heart and unite in formulating a gospel entirely human, from which to preach sermons instructive and useful in teaching us how to attain the greatest benefits from this life—sermons that appeal to our intellects instead of our credulity and superstitions—and that this change of heart lead to the establishment of real charitable institutions when all the children born into the world whose parents are not capable of providing proper training could be received and trained throughout childhood and youth, classified according to their natural capacity and at maturity, unencumbered by superstitious idiosyncrasies, sent back to the world competent to become happy and useful citizens.

Let us imagine that the children of the

slums of all large cities, who are now born into and often educated to commit crime, were committed to such institutions where they could be properly trained to know the true value of human life and let us predict the result.

In another generation there would be no gunmen on the East Side of New York city, or in Whitechapel, London, to commit murder for pay; in fact, the criminal class would be reduced in all large cities and many good citizens made out of human beings who, under present conditions, become a menace to governments as well as society; and by the continued education of children to the belief that human life is the most valuable asset the world possesses. Then few generations would be required, under such teachings, to change the whole trend of human thought from the superstitions which have been instrumental in bringing the world to its present criminal condition, to a

universal desire for permanent peace among men.

Courage would be measured by forbearance and passion controlled by veneration for a love of human life.

PART SECOND

QUITE apart from the mountainous accumulation of crime existing on earth, which can be traced indirectly if not directly to the ineffectual teachings of the Christian religion, we are faced with an amount of unhappiness and discontent that indicates an appalling waste of the joys available in this life.

There are many domestic and social problems which might be solved by the abandonment of the conventions of the Christian religion and the substitution of a human doctrine meeting the actual conditions prevalent in the associations of the human race.

We have but to stand on the crowded thoroughfares of our large cities and note the unhappiness indicated by the many pass-

ing faces, and to observe the discontent of those with whom we come in daily contact to realize the failure of Christianity to produce that degree of mental placidity which natural conditions warrant and to create the belief that a change is necessary in the underlying influences which are guiding our mental tuition.

The most ecstatic bliss vouchsafed to man is to mate with the opposite sex in a partnership that will exist successfully throughout life; under otherwise normal conditions, the nearest approach to a state of complete happiness is constituted.

We need appeal to no supernatural power or existence for the gratification of our most ardent natural desires.

The supreme joys of this life are sufficient to warrant a lasting rest at its end, provided we are successful in securing a consort who satisfies the yearnings of human love. It is mainly upon the success of marriage that the

solution of the problem of life depends, for without that joyous sentimental companionship which exists between the happy man and wife, this life is deficient of its main pleasurable possibility. But there are thousands of marriages taking place daily where the temper of one or the both prove antagonistic, which renders a continuous union impossible except at the expense of happiness and contentment. The laws governing marriage in nearly all civilized countries are prompted by and are in accordance with the dictation of the Christian church which antagonizes any suggestion offering relief for the misfortunes of nuptial *mésalliances*; yet there is nothing in the course of human life so conducive to angry passion, hypocrisy, falsehood, deception and dissipation, all of which are sinful and wicked, than the unhappiness caused by incompatibility of temper between man and wife.

Here again the Christian religion has

proven a failure in its efforts to encourage righteous living or to produce a profound solution to the necessities which nature has forced upon us. Its failures in this respect are so obvious that a large per cent of the world's inhabitants either delay marriage beyond the time when the gratification of natural passion becomes essential to the pursuit of health and happiness, or prevents it altogether, thus establishing a condition which calls into existence a social problem, the solution of which is one of the most difficult we have to meet.

What is known as the social evil would not exist, or at least only to a minor extent, if our marriage laws permitted, and the conventions of society countenanced, a sane and reasonable means of alleviating the disaster caused by unfortunate marriages, most of which are due to the extreme youth of the contracting parties when reason and love are obscured by sexual passion; yet any sugges-

tion of a remedy for the glaring imperfections of our marriage laws are condemned and opposed by the church with such persistency that it has been impossible to change them except in the direction of greater cohesion.

The sanctity of home is a misnomer when used as applicable to the result of marriages which often develop into a continuous and offensive quarrel. There can be no sanctity under such conditions, and the rearing of children surrounded by domestic infelicity is predisposed to injure their chances for a happy and successful life.

These glaring imperfections in the construction of regulations controlling our domestic life have been in existence for centuries and have created discontent in hundreds of thousands of men and women; yet we allow a continuance of this devastation of human happiness, because Christian religion has instilled into our belief a conviction that

a marriage contract should remain in force regardless of consequences and notwithstanding the fact that they are life contracts, made generally at a time when neither the youth nor the maiden have attained a sufficient age of discretion to warrant them in making even a temporary partnership contract involving a small monetary consideration.

It is not the purpose of these writings to discourage marriage or to encourage the separation of those who have married; in fact, its purpose is exactly to the contrary. They are directed toward a search for the means of causing universal marriage by finding a way to insure its success, for without it the value of human life is largely depreciated and the enhancement of the value of human life is undeniably, at this time, the most important step towards the advancement of civilization that can be made.

Progress in any effort to correct the imperfections of our marriage laws is dependent mainly upon the inauguration of a human religion with which to awaken the public conscience to the fact that they are now a source of as much or more misery than of happiness and that our churches stand materially opposed to any practical remedy which is suggested.

Probably the most sensitive sentiment we feel is the love of the parent for the child, and the separation of parents involves at least a partial separation of the child from either the father or mother which creates distress so acute that the parents often continue living together throughout a long existence harrowed by jealousy, angry contentions and suspicions which, but for the child, would terminate early enough in life for each to find a congenial mate and live happily to the end. It is questionable whether the child is benefited by this fact. Early

impressions are more effective in forming character than those which are received later. The excitement and distress imparted to children by quarreling or dissipated parents are sure to affect adversely their characters and endanger their success in life.

A greater number of vicious dispositions are cultivated and permanently developed through the result of marriage misalliances both in parents and their children than are caused either by other environments or inheritance; and a vicious disposition is a curse to its possessor and a cause of destruction to the comfort and often to the happiness of those who are brought in contact with it.

This argument is not directed towards nor does it advocate regulations permitting the loose intermingling of the sexes. It is desired simply to expose the imperfections of our existing regulations which are so inadequate to the requirements of our natural

desires that the loose intermingling of the sexes has already developed to a distressing extent.

It may be justly claimed that the ingenuity of man has failed to provide means for the propagation of the race and the gratification of the sexual passion without causing unhappiness to many and making law breakers of many more. It may be justly claimed, also, that the churches are mainly responsible for this dereliction of duty, because any change in our marriage laws, making them more practical, is a violation of its creed. The question is, therefore, how can we cure the existing evil and prevent the depreciation in the value of human life which it is causing?

The most important innovation necessary to the solution of this question is the adoption of a religion which directs us in securing the full benefits of this life and leaves the unreal life to come to the direction of

the imaginary power which is to cause it.

To cure an evil such as that under discussion we must strike at the root, which, in this case, is the mental temper of mankind produced by following the Christian religion through centuries past. We must be made to realize that happiness in this life is the all-important result which should be accomplished by our religious beliefs, and that while bringing happiness to many, marriage, under existing laws, destroys the happiness of thousands and thousands of well-meaning people worthy of a better fate. With this belief once instilled into the mental faculty of man, the remedy would soon be forthcoming; but it is improbable that early relief can be realized through a religious evolution such as that proposed. Therefore, any suggestion, practical under existing conditions, should have careful consideration.

When the writer occupied a prominent

official position in Washington many years ago, a very attractive—in fact, a beautiful young woman came into his office and informed him that her husband, who was an employé in his bureau, was paying attention to his female assistant and neglecting his home duties. Her story indicated clearly that fault rested with the husband who was informed, firstly, that no scandal would be permitted among the employées, and then was asked if he loved his wife, to which he replied in the affirmative. He was then told that his wife had called and complained of his conduct and that there were a great many men waiting anxiously to possess just such beautiful young women; men who would appreciate her as a wife which he did not, and that if he was not careful he would lose her. This was a contingency which had never occurred to him. It had the desired effect for the wife informed the writer several months later that all differences between them had

been settled and that they were both happy. They are, so far as known, still living happily together.

This incident is briefly mentioned as illustrative of the effect which can be produced in the settlement of trouble between man and wife by an appeal to human nature from an authoritative source. A large per cent of the divorces granted could be avoided by the intervention of a legally authorized arbitrator, if appealed to in the early stages of the marital infelicity. Trouble between man and wife usually begins with trivial differences which, if once obliterated, permits of a continuous life of domestic happiness. Therefore, it is proposed to establish a Court of Reconciliation to which either the husband or wife, or both, can go for advice and aid. A court which deals directly with the man and wife and before which attorneys are prohibited from pleading; a court possessed with power to summons

either on the application of the other for interrogation under oath if need be, and through which all applications for divorce must pass and receive approval before they can be filed in the courts having jurisdiction to grant divorce.

This court should be composed of profound students of human nature and unusual discretion, and should be required by law not to allow the filing of a divorce suit until every possible means which might cause reconciliation had been exhausted and after the rights and interests of both husband, wife and children, if any, had been considered.

It is proposed, also, that our marriage laws and the conventions of society be so relaxed that no disgrace nor reflection of any kind could be attached to the judgments of this court or to the divorce if necessary.

Divorce would be less immoral under such safeguards and its results less injurious to

the value of life than to force continuance of marriage contracts after affection and respect ceased to exist between husband and wife.

It is a wicked law which—unless immorality is proven—forces a contract to remain valid after it has become a failure and destructive to the happiness and welfare of all parties concerned.

The statutory grounds for divorce in nearly all countries are such that either the male or female is more or less disgraced by the mere fact of having been divorced, and the conventions of religion and society frown upon the innocent as well as the guilty party; therefore, when marriage becomes a destruction to success and happiness and leads to lawlessness, as it often does, there is no escape except that which is accompanied by the stigma resulting from requirements of the law and injustice of religious and social conventions.

So long as these conditions exist, so long will illicit relations between the sexes continue to increase, and so long will marriage contribute to produce a feeling of indifference on the part of those made unhappy whether the life lasts or not.

The moral standard of any community would be vastly improved by the proposed enactments, and a chance would be given to the rearrangement of life along lines that might bring happiness to many now drifting in discomfort and misery.

It would, of course, take time for society to adapt itself to such divergent conditions from those which now exist; but the result would eventually contribute to the success of and encourage early marriage, substantially decrease the number of divorces desired and reduce commercialized vice, thereby adding materially to the morality and happiness of the human race with the consequent enhancement of the value of human life.

THIRD PART

It is with some degree of hesitancy that we approach the part that Christian religion is performing in the education and training of children, for it is here that its hurtful superstitions take root and permeate the whole human fabric.

Every child born to the followers of the Christian faith receives that lasting superstitious mental impression under which the world has arrived at its present state of strife and wickedness and which it is almost impossible for the child to eradicate after its mentality has developed reasoning faculties.

We refer to the continuous cheapening of this life by teaching the child that it should be subordinated to a suppositive future spiritual existence.

Generations of the human race are exalted or degenerated by the wise or blundering beliefs and impulses of those who train children from infancy to years of discretion, yet the world goes on in the same old way allowing generation after generation of children to be trained by parents totally incompetent to impart those high moral, intellectual, and natural thoughts which are essential in the making of good and honorable citizens.

The per cent of parents competent and so situated that they can properly care for and train their children into intelligent and healthy adults is comparatively small, and to them no advice or counsel is necessary except that which opposes the superstitions of the Christian religion. The child is indeed fortunate who can receive the loving attention and guidance of intelligent parents and be surrounded by the supreme joys of a comfortable and happy home. But what of the

millions who are not so blessed? It is not the prosperous fortunate few who conclusively effect the future of the human race; it is the teeming millions of budding life born to the lower and poorer classes of society who, through suffrage and energy, are the future wielders of empire and makers or destroyers of civilization. It is to the vast majorities of mankind we must look for the suppression of wickedness and vice, and to achieve success we must find the means of eliminating the vicious propensities which naturally grow from unclean and immoral surroundings during early life.

Christianity has utterly failed to provide a solution to the glaring imperfections of our customs in the rearing of the great majority of the children born into this naturally glorious world. It has contented itself with the inculcation of its superstitious beliefs that cheapen our natural and real life, down to the very lowest grades of society, and has

proven its inability to stem the tide of human passion which is sweeping the human race towards utter misery and despair. Why, then, can we not try a human religion, applying it first to the rearing and training of children, thus laying a foundation for a new and, as we believe, a better civilization?

Many of our nations have abandoned despotic forms of government which formally prevailed, to enjoy greater freedom under republican forms of government. The old Puritanic sumptuary laws have been modified and rejected as unjust and inhuman. The world is drifting towards universal democracy as a means of relief from the crimes against the people committed by cruel monarchs in the name of justice. The great masses of the people are learning the art of self-government, how to throw off the yoke of servitude inherited from old governmental forms which once were as fixed as the superstitions of religion.

As man's mental point of view on life broadens, changes have been and are taking place in all the governing influences of life except that of religion, which affects our destiny more intimately than all the rest and should cause a grand advance in mental complacency equal to the advance of science. Therefore, when our religion fails to bring peace to the world or stem the tide of iniquitous injustice now casting its gloom over the human race, why should we not have a new and more natural religion which conforms to the requirements of advancing education, of increasing population and which will elevate the standard of human life?

The answer to this question involves the admission that nearly two thousand years of Christianity has produced in such a large proportion of our inhabitants an indestructible faith in the existence of a spiritual life, that success in the ultimate adoption of a

human religion depends in a great measure on the training of children in conformity with its teachings.

The word "charity" is synonymous with the perfection of a scheme to accomplish that result, for there is no condition of life where advancing civilization so strenuously needs the intervention of philanthropy than in the creation of a humane system for raising children so that they may be equipped to meet the necessities of life as we find them to-day.

With this fact in mind it is proposed that homes be established for children who have passed the age where mothers' care is essential and that these homes be open to universal but not compulsory use. It is not intended to suggest that the proposed homes should be limited to that portion of our people who are deserving of charity, but that they be available for children with parents able to pay for their keep and training.

In fact, the extended use of such homes would depend upon the separation of the charitable institutions from those which could be made self-sustaining.

It is mainly through the extended use of such homes, which should serve the double purpose of providing an intelligent system for the raising and training of children and imparting to them new religious philosophy, that old superstitions can be prevented from transmission to future generations; therefore, these homes should become a part of the organization that is to undertake the enlightenment of the world by the spread of a human religion.

It is only through the voluntary use of such homes that they could be made effective. If properly organized and controlled, results would soon attract to them a large portion of the children who now drift to maturity without proper care or training.

It takes but little contact with the world

to reveal the deplorable neglect forced upon children by the necessities compelling their parents to engage in commercial or other service without the means of providing proper safeguards during absence, or the cruel treatment often received from irritable or drunken parents. We have but to go into the crowded portions of large cities and see the thousands of wounded, scared and diseased children to find convincing proof of the incompetency of either the laws of nations, or the Christian religion, to prevent this cruelty to helpless infancy, to understand why vice and wickedness stalks the earth untrameled in a successful race with peace and happiness.

There is no field where philanthropy could produce more humane results or render greater service to advancing civilization than by the establishment of homes in which these children could live and be trained, to say nothing of using them as a means of plant-

ing the seeds of a human religion for the benefit of the world's future.

Let us compare their condition and prospects in life even with that of those who are raised in orphan asylums, usually poorly financed and consequently not so effective as they should be.

The writer has in mind one called The Foundation Home, which from its name will be known as purely a charitable institution. There hundreds of children are trained to useful pursuits and brought through the early stages of life contented and happy under a sane and practical system of restraint conducive to health, intelligence and morality.

In the extensive grounds of this institution can be seen at certain hours of the day, hundreds of children going through exercises and playing games, clean and joyously radiating health; thus, notwithstanding their unfortunate origin, at maturity they are de-

livered to the world competent to become respected citizens of the nation in which this institution is located. Consider for a moment the kindness to the little helpless human beings, and the benefit to the future of any large city, if from its slums we could literally sweep the children into such institutions.

We must compare the actual condition and possibilities of the children born to the lower grades of society, with those in such institutions, to appreciate the cruelty which is being permitted within our sight, and to admit that both the civic and religious organizations have failed to apply a remedy which is so obviously available.

It is not alone the poorer classes who would benefit by the inauguration of a child-rearing evolution such as is proposed. Thousands of parents who cannot and know they cannot give that attention to their children which love prompts them to give, but

who are able to pay for their keep, would gladly avail themselves of these homes if they were properly organized and humanely managed.

The general prejudice which now exists against the temporary separation of parents and their younger children would soon disappear the same as that which was originally felt against the use of public schools and the cost of maintaining them in such institutions would not exceed the cost of keeping them at home. We send our older children to boarding-schools and often pay heavily for tuition; then, why should we look with disfavor on sending the younger children to institutions where they can receive the necessary care and training which we cannot give them at home?

We may safely predict that a successful demonstration would appeal to the mother love which naturally grasps at anything ensuring to the welfare of the child; that the



raising of children without system and in disregard of the laws of health, or of training necessary to permit of success in after life, would soon become a thing of the past.

We do not desire to paint a pen picture of an easy transition from the present deplorable condition of youthful life to a practical intelligent organized system which will insure its development into matured manhood with all the force and instinctive morality which nature provided for. It is not an easy task, but one that can be accomplished by concentration of purpose, and there is no step towards a solution of life's problems more inspiring to those engaged in benevolent work or more promising of an early remission of man's fanatical religious beliefs than that leading to a sane and humane method of raising children in well-organized institutions under the restraint of sanitary and healthful rules enforced by humane instructors who, in turn, could be made an-

swerable to the parents for the safety and well being of the child.

There could not exist a condition more appealing to charity, benevolence and humanity of mankind than that of helping helpless childhood to cast off the mantle of cruelty which now shadows their progress to maturity, so that they may grow in the radiance of life and in fear and abhorrence of crime.

THE END

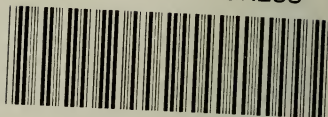
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